

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the subject application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-13. (Canceled)

14. (Original) A search method comprising:
obtaining a query written in a first format from a user;
translating the query into a second format using a probabilistic dictionary, the probabilistic dictionary mapping terms from the first format to the second format;
searching a database for information responsive to the translated query; and
returning search results written in the second format to the user.

15. (Original) The search method of claim 14, further comprising:
obtaining search result selections from the user;
using said search result selections to modify the probabilistic dictionary of term mappings.

16. (Original) The search method of claim 15, wherein the modification comprises adjusting at least one probability associated with at least one mapping in the probabilistic dictionary.

17. (Original) The search method of claim 14, in which the step of translating the query into the second format includes expanding the query.

18. (Original) The search method of claim 17, in which the expanded query includes alternative encodings of the query terms.

19. (Original) The search method of claim 17, in which the expanded query includes alternative language translations of the query terms.

20. (Original) The search method of claim 17, in which the expanded query includes alternative encodings and alternative language translations of the query terms.

21. (Original) The search method of claim 18, in which the expanded query includes synonyms of the alternative encodings of the query terms.

Claims 22-45. (Canceled)